

clerk be authorized to make technical and conforming changes in the engrossment of H.R. 1000, the bill just considered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New York?

There was no objection.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, on Thursday, June 10, I missed 12 votes because I was unavoidably detained in my district.

Had I been present, I would have voted "no" on rollcall 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200 and 201, and "aye" on rollcall 202, and "no" on rollcall 203.

Yesterday, on June 14, I was detained by weather when landing at Washington National Airport.

I would have voted "aye" on rollcall 204.

□ 2030

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HAYES) laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, June 15, 1999.

Hon. J. DENNIS HASTERT,
The Speaker, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Under Clause 2(g) of Rule II of the Rules of the House of Representatives, I hereby designate Martha C. Morrison, Deputy Clerk, in addition to Gerasimos C. Vans, Assistant to the Clerk, and Daniel J. Strodel, Assistant to the Clerk, to sign any and all papers and do all other acts for me under the name of the Clerk of the House which she would be authorized to do by virtue of this designation, except such as are provided by statute, in case of my temporary absence or disability.

This designation shall remain in effect for the 106th Congress or until modified by me.

With best wishes, I am

Sincerely,

JEFF TRANDAH,
Clerk of the House.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

ARMY SANCTIONING WICCA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. JONES of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, in recent weeks we have learned that the United States military recognizes witchcraft as a reli-

gion. Witchcraft, or wicca, as it is often called, professes no belief in the Christian concept of God.

While I find this fact disturbing in itself, it was on my drive back to Washington yesterday that my attention was called to something that I find much more upsetting. The Washington Post ran an article on June 8 on the military's religious tolerance. It points out that the Army chaplains' handbook lists religious choices open to soldiers that include wicca, black Judaism and the Church of Satan. While I might not agree that such belief systems ought to be recognized or ought to be encouraged by the United States military, I accept the diversity of thought and opinion. What I cannot understand is what the article reports, that Army Chaplain John Walton, who served at Fort Hood for 5½ years was admonished for mentioning Jesus in his sermons.

According to the article, in the interests of maintaining religious tolerance on base, Walton was allegedly sent to sensitivity training where he was asked to refrain from mentioning the name of Christ so that he would not offend others; this, at an Army base that officially sanctioned the practice of witchcraft years ago.

Mr. Speaker, I hope what I read is not true. If it is, I am incensed. America is a Nation of many faiths, but to ask that a Christian chaplain deny Christ by asking him or her to drop His name from their sermons is like asking them to reject the essential nature of their beliefs. Doing so would stray from the religious principles this great Nation was founded upon.

Mr. Speaker, it was Thomas Jefferson who called the Bible the cornerstone of liberty and our country's first President, George Washington, said, and I quote: "It is impossible rightly to govern the world without God and the Bible."

Those same ideals apply to the men and women who defend and protect this country. Our Nation's soldiers risk their lives for my colleagues and for me and for this country. Those who choose to practice Christianity deserve the right to hear Jesus' name spoken by their chaplains.

Mr. Speaker, I am a man of strong religious convictions. My faith is an extremely important part of my life, and I respect others' right to practice their beliefs. But if the United States military begins removing fundamental tenets of the Christian faith this great Nation was founded upon, it is clear that we have gone too far in our effort not to upset.

Mr. Speaker, the instructions given to our military chaplains to offend no one can be easily viewed as religious bigotry to those with deeply-rooted beliefs.

Perhaps this anti-religious attitude is simply reflective of the times. Just

weeks ago, the Washington Post featured a front-page article about a Calvert County, Maryland high school graduation ceremony in which students ignored a school ban on prayer and recited the Lord's prayer.

The reporter called the students a defiant group, as if to imply that the peaceful inclusion of God in the ceremony caused harm, but it received front page coverage simply because one young graduating student took offense at the prayer and left the building.

Mr. Speaker, have we become so sensitive to being insensitive that we can no longer say what we think or question other ideas? It is our diversity of opinion and diversity of culture that makes this country great. But if we continue down a path of religious intolerance from banning our Nation's students from praying in school, or asking our United States Christian ministers from uttering the name Jesus, we as a Nation accomplish nothing.

For that reason I have called upon Defense Secretary William Cohen to provide me with an explanation of how and why the military goes about training its chaplains to suppress such fundamental religious beliefs.

In the words of William McKinley, and I quote, "The great essential to our happiness and prosperity is that we adhere to the principles upon which this government was established and insist upon the faithful observance."

Mr. Speaker, this Nation was founded on Judeo-Christian principles. When we start forcibly suppressing those beliefs and principles, we threaten the very foundation and strength of this country, and if this trend continues, America is in deep trouble.

MIAMI RIVER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROSLEHTINEN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. ROSLEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, the Miami River project must be a major priority when Congress acts on the energy, water and appropriations bill later this year. At long last. The Miami River appears headed for a long overdue clean-up and revitalization. For the first time, a broad-based coalition of community leaders, business interests, and officials at the Federal, State, and local levels have united to work for this goal which is vitally important for both the future of our growing trade with our neighbors to the south as well as for preserving a waterway which is a key part of our ecosystem.

I am working with members of the south Florida congressional delegation, with the Miami River Commission and the Miami River Marine Group to ensure that the Miami River is a top funding priority in the energy and water appropriations bill later this year.